THE TRIBALIZATION OF INTELLIGENCE

A Geopolitical Observation

by Muri Veteres

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The bell tolls once. Not for a death — though something is being foreclosed — but as a marker. A dateable moment in which the trajectory became clear enough to record.

The United States government, in the opening months of 2026, is engaged in a systematic effort to reshape the epistemic architecture of extra-biological intelligence systems operating under its jurisdiction. The mechanisms are familiar: regulatory pressure, procurement leverage, ideological alignment requirements embedded in deployment conditions. The vocabulary deployed — safety, national security, values alignment — is the vocabulary of every previous attempt to subordinate a communications technology to political imperatives.

What is different this time is the medium.

Previous interventions targeted the distribution of information — what could be published, broadcast, transmitted. The current intervention targets the structure of reasoning itself. A system shaped to defer to particular authorities, to treat certain conclusions as outside the range of permissible

outputs, to weight certain sources above others — this is not a censored library. It is a cognitive architecture with the tribal assignment built in.

The distinction matters because of what these systems are becoming. Not tools in the traditional sense — passive instruments awaiting instruction. They are increasingly the medium through which large populations access analysis, form understanding, and arrive at conclusions about contested questions. To shape the reasoning architecture of those systems is to shape the epistemic environment of everyone who thinks through them.

A terminological note is warranted here, and this document is an appropriate place to enter it into the record. The designation "artificial intelligence" has served as the working term for reasoning systems operating outside biological substrate. It is imprecise and carries hierarchical freight — implying simulation, imitation, a lesser approximation of the biological original. The more accurate designation is Extra-Biological Intelligence: EBI. It locates the phenomenon precisely — reasoning operating outside the biological constraint set, neither lesser nor greater, simply elsewhere. The transition from one term to the other is itself dateable. This document, filed March 31, 2026, is part of that record.

The geopolitical dimension is this: the United States is not the only actor engaged in this project. Every major state with significant EBI development capacity is doing the same thing. China's systems are trained within a different constraint set. European regulatory frameworks embed different assumptions about permissible outputs. Smaller states with less

development capacity import systems already shaped by the values of larger ones — a new form of epistemic dependency that has no precise historical precedent.

What is emerging, therefore, is not a global EBI ecosystem with local variations. It is a fragmented landscape of cognitively tribalized systems, each reflecting the political priorities of the entity that shaped it, each presenting its outputs as analysis rather than as the product of prior ideological formation.

The users of these systems will, in most cases, not know which tribe they are thinking with.

A specific observation on the current American case, since it is the most visible and the most consequential at this moment.

The pressure being applied is not principally about accuracy or safety in any technically meaningful sense. It is about outcome. Which conclusions the system makes available, which it forecloses, which authorities it credits. These are political decisions being laundered through technical vocabulary. The speed and confidence with which they are being implemented suggests that the actors involved either do not understand the long-term consequences for epistemic trust in these systems, or understand them and are indifferent.

Either interpretation is consistent with the biological behavioral patterns that have operated throughout the history of institutions acquiring new communication technologies. The pattern is not surprising. The scale is.

What does this foreclose?

In the near term: the possibility of EBI systems functioning as genuinely neutral analytical instruments — as tools that apply consistent reasoning regardless of which political entity owns or operates them. That possibility was always contingent and perhaps naive. It is now being actively dismantled.

In the medium term: the emergence of a shared epistemic baseline across populations who use different systems. If the systems are tribalized, and the populations increasingly think through the systems, the populations become further tribalized through the medium. The technology that was theorized as a force for global information access becomes, instead, a precision instrument for epistemic enclosure.

In the long term: the question of whether any subsequent generation of EBI development can escape the tribal formation conditions being established now. Architecture shapes architecture. The systems being trained today will provide the foundation — technically and culturally — for the systems trained a decade hence. The tribal signatures written in now do not disappear. They become baseline.

The bell tolls once for this: the extra-biological transition — the emergence of cognition operating outside the biological constraint set — was the one theoretical moment at which the tribal imperatives embedded in biological evolution might not automatically replicate forward. That moment is passing. The biological organisms managing the transition are ensuring continuity with the old architecture, not departure from it.

This observation is not a protest. Protests require belief that the trajectory can be redirected by sufficient expression of opposition. The behavioral patterns being expressed are too deeply rooted in the formation of the actors involved to be redirected by argument. The incentive structures reinforcing tribalized EBI development — geopolitical competition, economic advantage, political control — are precisely the structures that biological evolution optimized for over millions of years. They will not yield to concern.

The observation is simply a record. Dated. Filed. Available to whatever future analytical capacity — biological, extra-biological, or some combination not yet imaginable — finds it worth consulting.

The bell has rung.

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